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National Indian Health Board  
**NATIONAL TRIBAL COVID-19 RESPONSE**

910 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE | Washington, D.C. 20003 | 202-507-4070 | [www.nihb.org](http://www.nihb.org)

The National Indian Health Board is committed to ensuring that the Tribes remain informed on COVID-19 and have the resources and assistance needed to respond to the pandemic. This newsletter will contain the latest resources, announcements and information on scheduled calls and webinars.

To view all of our resources, please be sure to visit our COVID-19 Tribal Resource Center at [www.nihb.org/covid-19](http://www.nihb.org/covid-19).

Thursday, August 20, 2020

[www.nihb.org/covid-19](http://www.nihb.org/covid-19)

**NIHB COVID-19 Tribal Resource Center**

- Funding Opportunities and Technical Assistance **Resources**
- Administration and Agency **Response**
- Community Health **Tools**
- Advocacy **Tools**
- **List** of Member and Partner Organizations to find regionally-specific resources
- Upcoming Calls Webinars and **Events**

**CDC Releases Study Showing American Indians and Alaska Natives are Disproportionately Affected by COVID-19**

An early release of the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) issued by the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**



(CDC) examines COVID-19 among American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs). The MMWR indicates that AI/ANs appear to be disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic; however, limited data are available to

**Save the Date! HRSA  
Tribal Consultation on  
the CARES Act Provider  
Relief Fund Monday,  
August 31, 2020**



The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) is conducting this rapid Tribal consultation to seek input and Tribal recommendations on the allocations of CARES Act Provider Relief Fund, announced by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on April 22, 2020.

**AGENDA**

**3:00- 3: 15 PM Welcome**

- **Opening Prayer**
- **Opening Comments and Welcome** Tom Engels, Administrator, HRSA
- **Update - Elizabeth "Betsy" Wieand, Lead Policy Advisor, HRSA**

**3:15 – 3:55 PM Open Discussion with Tribal Leaders**

**3:55 PM - Closing**

**4:00 PM - and Adjourn call**

**Monday, August 31, 2020**

quantify the disparity in COVID-19 incidence, severity, and outcomes among AI/AN persons compared with those among other racial/ethnic groups. In 23 states with adequate race/ethnicity data, the cumulative incidence of laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 among AI/ANs was 3.5 times that among non-Hispanic white persons. This report has public health implications for AI/AN communities and demonstrates adequate health care and public health infrastructure resources are needed to support a culturally responsive public health effort. [Read more.](#)

**NIH Issues Dear Tribal Leader Letter Regarding Vaccine Trials**

The Tribal Health Research Office at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is



currently in the process of disseminating a Dear Tribal Leader Letter (DTLL) from the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) in relation to the COVID-19 Prevention Network (CoVPN), which seeks to develop and conduct Phase III clinical trials for COVID-19 vaccines and monoclonal antibodies. NIAID is seeking guidance and input to ensure Tribes have the information needed to make informed decisions regarding potential study participation.

[Read the full letter.](#)

**3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Eastern  
Time**  
**Call-in Number: 888-566-7684**  
**Passcode: 7562556**

## Call & Webinar Announcements

### **Environmental Health: Air Pollution, COVID-19 & Health Disparities, Friday, August 21**

The **National Institute for Health Care Management** (NIHCM) Foundation is hosting a webinar on environmental health and COVID-19. Researchers in the US have suggested air pollution has significantly worsened the COVID-19 pandemic and potentially led to more deaths than if pollution-free skies were the norm. This webinar will explore how different neighborhoods in the same city can have vastly different air quality and what that means for their residents' short- and long-term health outcomes.

**Friday, August 21, 2020**  
**12:00 PM – 1:00 PM Eastern Time**  
[Register for the Webinar](#)

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### **Safe Learning for Kids Webinar, Tuesday, August 25**

Join the **Federal Emergency Management Agency** (FEMA) Region II National Preparedness Division for a webinar on keeping children safe while they learn. As schools reopen with a virtual learning component, students are spending more time online and are vulnerable to cyber threats. Guest speakers from the **Federal Trade Commission** (FTC) will discuss cybersecurity for children and tips on dealing with cyberbullying. A guest speaker from the **Administration for Children and Families** (ACF), a division of the Department of Health & Human Services, will discuss how to prepare children for returning to the classroom in a COVID-19 environment.



**FEMA**

**Tuesday, August 25, 2020**

**12:00 PM - 01:00 PM Eastern Time**  
**[Register for the Webinar](#)**

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## **Department of Veterans' Affairs Virtual Tribal Consultation on Care Coordination, Tuesday, August 25, 2020**

Tribal leaders and Tribal health directors are invited to a virtual Tribal consultation hosted by the **Department of Veterans Affairs** (VA) focusing on care coordination for veterans receiving care under VA's Indian Health Service/Tribal Health Program (IHS/THP) Reimbursement Agreement Program (RAP). The virtual Tribal consultation session is on Tuesday, August 25, 2020, from 3:30–5:00 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time). Participants are encouraged to interact by sharing comments/questions using the chat function during the presentation.



Tribal input and recommendations will help the VA in enhancing and improving its care coordination for AI/AN Veterans who use IHS/THP RAP, while ensuring VA upholds its responsibility to veterans healthcare. Find program information, including templates, provider guides, and fact sheets, at VA [Office of Community Care's website](#) and the [Office of Tribal Government Relations' website](#).

Submit written comments to [tribalgovernmentconsultation@va.gov](mailto:tribalgovernmentconsultation@va.gov) before September 25, 2020, or by mail to Department of Veterans Affairs, Suite 915L, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420. For questions, contact [Tribal.Agreements@va.gov](mailto:Tribal.Agreements@va.gov).

**Tuesday, August 25, 2020**  
**3:30–5:00 p.m. Eastern Time**  
**Call-in number: 1-800-767-1750; Extension: 85286**  
**[Join the Session](#)**

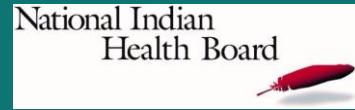
### **Announcements**

## NIHB Leads Efforts on Joint Letter to Congress Opposing Policy Changes to Medicaid FMAP

Tribal Nations and organizations encouraged to send their own letter - template available!

On July 27, the **National Indian Health Board** (NIHB) sent a joint letter to Congress firmly opposing any policy that would undo decades of precedent in federal Medicaid policy towards

Tribal Nations by extending 100% Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) to States for Medicaid services rendered by providers outside the Indian health system to American Indians/Alaska Natives. This policy would seek to stabilize state Medicaid programs at the direct expense of the Indian health system, and runs contrary to federal trust and treaty obligations.



NIHB was joined by Tribal Nations, **National Congress of American Indians**, **National Council of Urban Indian Health**, and multiple regional Tribal organizations in this important advocacy. NIHB encourages all Tribal Nations and organizations to join us in showing that Indian Country is uniformly opposed to this provision by sending similar letters. Please find this **template letter** on NIHB's Tribal COVID-19 Resource Center. Read the joint letter [here](#).

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### FCC 2.5 GHz Rural Tribal Window **DEADLINE EXTENDED! Applications Now due Wednesday, September 2, 2020 at 6:00 PM ET**

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a greater need for high-speed internet connections as communities turn to telemedicine. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) 2.5 GHz Rural Tribal Window is unique opportunity for Tribes in rural areas to directly access unassigned spectrum over their Tribal lands, subject to buildout requirements. [Read more here.](#)



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### Medicare Eligible Hospitals: Hardship Exception Application Application Deadline: Sept. 1, 2020

The **Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services** (CMS) opened the hardship exception application submission period for Medicare's **Eligible Hospital (EH) Hardship Exception** to avoid the **2021** payment adjustment. EHs that utilized 2014 Certified Resource and Patient Management System

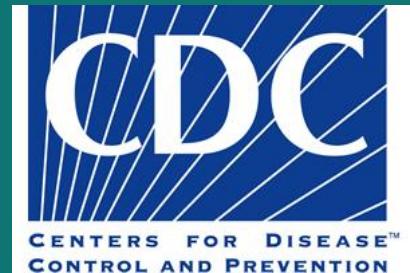
(RPMS) Electronic Health Record (EHR) and were unable to demonstrate Promoting Interoperability (formerly known as Meaningful Use) in CY 2019 may need to apply for a hardship. Read the full memo [here](#).

The deadline to apply for an **EH Hardship Exceptions is Tuesday, September 1, 2020**. Please note: This deadline has been extended from the original date of July 1, 2020 due to COVID-19. Direct all inquiries to Drew Morgan [andrew.morgan@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:andrew.morgan@cms.hhs.gov) related to hardship exceptions. For IHS Specific questions related to the hardship exception, please direct all inquiries to IHS's Promoting Interoperability Team at [promotinginteroperabilityteam@ihss.gov](mailto:promotinginteroperabilityteam@ihss.gov).

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### **Serious Adverse Health Events Associated with Methanol-based Hand Sanitizers**

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) issued the following Health Alert Network (HAN) Health Advisory on July 5, 2020. On June 19, 2020, the [U.S. Food and Drug Administration](#) (FDA) advised consumers not to use any hand sanitizer manufactured by "Eskbiochem SA de CV" in Mexico, due to the potential presence of methanol, a "toxic alcohol", as an active ingredient, which can cause blindness and/or death when absorbed through the skin or when swallowed. Since then, [FDA](#) has identified additional ABHSR products that contain methanol and is working with manufacturers and distributors on a voluntary recall of these products. [Read more](#).



### **Funding Opportunities**

**National Indian Health Board Request for Applications for COVID-19 Tribal School Readiness Mini-Grants**  
**Deadline August 28, 2020**

With funding from the **Indian Health Service**, the **National Indian Health Board** (NIHB) is offering a funding opportunity for Tribes and Tribal Organizations seeking to strengthen school preparation and readiness for safe operations during the COVID pandemic. This funding is intended to fulfill immediate Tribal school readiness needs.

NIHB will provide mini-grants to a maximum of 15 Tribes or Tribal organizations in amounts up to \$2,000 each. Tribes may use these funds for activities in one or more of these categories:

- Materials and Equipment Acquisition
- Facilities & Infrastructure
- Outreach and Education
- Training and Technical Assistance
- Evaluation and Assessment

The completed application is due by 11:59 PM EDT on Friday, August 28, 2020. The project period will run from approximately September 1 through October 31, 2020. [Read the complete RFA](#).



The image shows a screenshot of the National Indian Health Board (NIHB) COVID-19 Response application form. The header reads "National Indian Health Board" and "NATIONAL TRIBAL COVID-19 RESPONSE". Below the header, there are sections for "NIHB: Tribal School Readiness Mini-grant" and "Request for Applications". The main body of the page contains detailed information about the grant, including the amount (\$2,000), eligible uses (e.g., materials, facilities, outreach, training, evaluation), and application requirements. It also includes a "Who is eligible?" section, a "How to apply" section, and a "Pre-Application Webinar" section. At the bottom, there is a link for "For questions, contact Brett Wheeler at [bwheeler@nihb.org](mailto:bwheeler@nihb.org)".

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**Visit the NIHB COVID-19 Tribal Resource Center at [www.nihb.org/covid-19](http://www.nihb.org/covid-19).  
Reach the NIHB COVID-19 Response Team, contact [CWheeler@nihb.org](mailto:CWheeler@nihb.org)**

**For media inquiries, contact April Hale at [AHale@nihb.org](mailto:AHale@nihb.org)**

